

THE RADICAL DEMOCRACY OF NEW YORK AND THE INDEPENDENT DEMOCRACY.

Letter from Senator Chase, of Ohio, to Hon. B. F. Butler, of New York.

WASHINGTON, July 15, 1852.

DEAR SIR: The year 1848 will be memorable in history as a year of movement, of progress, of enfranchisement. In that year it was my fortune to be closely associated with you in political action. We were both members of the Convention of the Free Democracy which assembled at Buffalo; both members of the committee which unanimously reported the resolutions which were unanimously adopted by the Convention as its platform; and both members of the committee designated by the Convention to advise Martin Van Buren of his nomination, as the candidate of the Free Democracy, for the Presidency of the United States.

The grand object of that assemblage, declared by itself, was "the union of the people, under the banner of Free Democracy, in a solemn and final declaration of their independence of the slave power, and of their fixed determination to rescue the Federal Government from its control." The immediate and pressing necessity of the hour was the exclusion of slavery from the Territories acquired from Mexico; but it was clearly understood that this exclusion, if accomplished, would not be a final settlement of the controversy between slavery and freedom. It was seen, on the contrary, that the slave power, resulting from the unity and magnitude of the slave interest, and its firm establishment in nearly half the States, would still be able to control the National Government and proscribe its opponents through the action of national administrations, by its old policy of refusing support to any political party not prepared to acquiesce in its demands, and giving support to that party which would most completely acquiesce. The Convention, therefore, did not confine itself to a simple declaration in favor of the prohibition of the extension of slavery into free territory, and the nomination of candidates hostile to such extension; but, while denying the right of interference by Congress with slavery within the limits of any State, resolved, nevertheless, that "it is the duty of the Federal Government to relieve itself from all responsibility for the existence or continuance of slavery, wherever that Government possesses constitutional power to legislate on the subject, and is thus responsible for its existence;" accepted "the issue tendered by the slave power;" and to its "demand for more slave States and more slave territory," gave "the calm but final answer, 'no more slave States, and no slave Territory,'" and declared that "the Government ought to return to its original policy, which, as the history of the country clearly shows, was not to extend, nationalize, or encourage, but to limit, localize, and discourage slavery." Having thus

defined their position in respect to slavery, and having, also, unanimously agreed upon a platform of principles and measures, embracing all the important political questions of the day, the members of the Convention solemnly pledged themselves to each other and the country, in this emphatic declaration:

"Resolved, That we inscribe on our banner, Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor, and Free Men, and under it will fight on and fight ever, until a triumphant victory shall reward our exertions."

I well remember the gratification and delight which you expressed upon the unanimous adoption of this platform by the committee, and when, as its chairman, you reported it to the Convention. The scene which then ensued will not soon fade from the memory of any who witnessed it. The vast multitude, animated by one impulse, literally shouted for joy. They seemed to feel that Democracy had, at length, broken the bonds of the slave power, and would henceforth have free course in its mission of enfranchisement and elevation, and that our country, guided by its maxims and penetrated by its spirit, would exhibit to the world the example of a Government openly, fearlessly, and consistently in favor of freedom everywhere and for all.

Nor shall I ever forget the honorable zeal with which the New York Democracy joined in this great movement for human liberty. Their devotion to freedom was not then for the first time proved. No sooner had it become evident that the war with Mexico must result in vast accessions to the territory of the Republic, than, with signal unanimity, they joined in the demand for the exclusion of slavery from the new acquisitions. At first they were almost unanimous in this demand; but the proscriptive denunciations with which the slave interest assailed all the friends of prohibition, shook the resolution of many, and converted the forward zeal of some into cold indifference or open hostility. The Radical Democracy of New York, however, stood firm; and when, in 1847, the opponents of the Proviso, having obtained, as was alleged, by force and fraud, the control of the Democratic Convention at Syracuse, rejected a resolution in favor of that great measure, the Radical Democracy, assembled at Herkimer, inscribed the Proviso of Freedom on their banner, and rejected the nominations of the Syracuse Convention, insuring thereby their rejection by the people. The members of the Legislature, which assembled the succeeding winter at Albany, representing both divisions of the Democracy, united in a call for a State Convention to meet at Utica, to appoint delegates to the Baltimore National Convention, agreeably to the established usages of the party. A committee of the Syracuse Convention had already called

another Convention, to meet at Albany, for the same purpose. Both Conventions assembled and appointed delegates. The appointees of the regularly called Utica Convention were friends—those of the Albany Convention opponents—of the Proviso. Both sets of delegates attended at Baltimore. Some of the slave States, as usual, were represented by numerous delegations, vastly disproportioned to their electoral votes, and were unanimous in their hostility to the Proviso and its friends. The Committee on Credentials reported against the admission of the Utica, and in favor of the admission of the Albany delegates. The Convention rejected the report; and yet, refusing to decide the question of right, resolved to admit both sets, thereby neutralizing the power of the regular delegation quite as effectually as if they had been excluded. Thus proscribed on account of their principles, the New York delegation refused to take seats in the Convention, and, returning to their constituents, issued a call for a Convention of the New York Democracy, to assemble at Utica, on the 22d of June, 1848, for the purpose of taking into consideration the existing condition of political affairs, and naming candidates for the Presidency and Vice Presidency.

The Convention assembled, and nominated MARTIN VAN BUREN, of New York, and HENRY DODGE, of Wisconsin, as candidates for President and Vice President, and issued an able address to the people in vindication of their position and action. In this address, the Convention, after declaring in the most explicit terms the devotion of the New York Democracy to the principles and measures of the Democracy of the Union, said:

"The head and front of our offending consists merely in this: we had simply declared that, while we would faithfully adhere to all the Compromises of the Constitution, and would maintain inviolate all the reserved rights of the States, we were necessarily opposed to the extension of slavery by any action of the Federal Government, into the territory of the United States, already or hereafter to be acquired, in which it does not exist; and that to this end we desired, and, so far as our efforts constitutionally directed could accomplish it, we designed, that the prohibition of slavery contained in the Ordinance of 1787—first proposed in 1783 by Thomas Jefferson—should be applied to these territories, so long as they should remain under the government of Congress. But, before the assembling of the Baltimore Convention, the slave power, in many of its convulsions, sat in judgment of these opinions, condemned them as heretical, denounced all who held them as apostates from the Democratic faith, and resolved to support no one for the Presidency or Vice Presidency who should adopt or favor them. It was to carry out these predeterminations, to give effect to these foregone conclusions, that our delegates were placed under the ban."

The effect of these denunciations upon the timid and time-serving, as well as the energy and decision of the New York Democracy in this hour of Freedom's peril, was thus vividly portrayed in this address:

"In this untoward state of things, amid this increasing defection to the interests of freedom, the Democracy of the State of New York felt it their duty to intervene. They opposed themselves to the current; and if they could not wholly arrest, they stayed its progress. In their primary and other Conventions, through the press, and in the various other forms in which, in this quarter of the Union, the masses are wont to make known their sentiments and wishes, the voices of the firm men of our State were lifted up to warn, to encourage, and to rally the friends of freedom, the lovers of justice, and the supporters of the Constitution. Still at Cincinnati, we pealed in trumpet-tones at Hunker and Utica, and has since been echoed from every hill top in the State."

It was in this spirit of devotion to justice, freedom, and the Constitution, and with the noble purpose of bringing back the Government to the policy of Jefferson, that the nominations of the New York Democracy were made at Utica, in 1848.

Contemporaneously with the Utica Convention, the opponents of slavery extension and the slave power, in Ohio, assembled at Columbus; rejected the nominees of both the Whig and Democratic National Conventions, as unfriendly to freedom, and summoned a National Convention, to meet at Buffalo on the 9th of August. A similar assemblage in Massachusetts concurred in that summons.

General DODGE, of Wisconsin, declined the Utica nomination, and the New York Democracy determined not to supply the vacancy, but to unite with the National Convention at Buffalo, in presenting to the American People candidates representing their principles.

When the Convention assembled, it was found to be composed almost wholly of Democrats; of Liberty men, thoroughly Democratic in their principles and views of public policy; and of Whigs, whose attachment to Whig measures had been overcome by their devotion to freedom, and their opposition to the encroachments of slavery and the usurpations of the slave power. The New York Democracy naturally took the lead.

PRESTON KING, a New York Democrat, prominent in Congress and at Baltimore, was Chairman of the first informal meeting, on the evening preceding the regular sitting of the Convention. In a short address, received with unanimous acclamation, he stated the principles which must form the basis of the political organization in which they were about to unite. He was requested to embody those principles in resolutions, and present them to the Convention upon its opening the next day, as the views of the meeting. Three resolutions were accordingly drawn up by him and presented to the Convention. I insert them, that it may be distinctly seen what was the line of action, in respect to slavery, recommended by the New York Democracy to the Buffalo Convention:

"Resolved, That it is the duty of the Federal Government to relieve itself of all responsibility for the extension or continuance of slavery, whenever that Government possesses constitutional authority, and is responsible for its existence."

"Resolved, That the States within which slavery exists are alone responsible for the continuance or existence of slavery within such States, and the Federal Government has no other responsibility nor constitutional authority to abolish or regulate slavery within the States."

"Resolved, That the true, and, in the judgment of this Convention, the only safe means of preventing the extension of slavery into the Territories now free, is to prohibit its existence in all such Territories by an act of Congress."

These resolutions, unanimously approved by the Convention, were referred to the Committee on Resolutions, of which you were chairman, and were embodied in the platform. I have already spoken of the harmony which characterized the labors of that committee: the unanimity with which they agreed upon the platform, and the unanimous enthusiasm with which the Convention, with one voice, ratified

it. You have not forgotten it; you will never forget it.

That PLATFORM, thoroughly Democratic in its principles and measures, and cordially accepted by the New York Democracy, made it easy for the Convention to adopt the Utica nomination for the Presidency as their own, although a large number of its members were already committed to the support of a New Hampshire Democrat, ever faithful to freedom, and then endeavored to them the more by the characteristic magnanimity with which he had placed the nomination which had been previously conferred on him at the disposal of the Convention.

MARTIN VAN BUREN, therefore, received the nomination for the Presidency, while CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS, a grandson of the foremost and ablest champion of the Declaration of Independence, and a son of the most distinguished and indefatigable defender of the right of petition and the liberties of the people, received the nomination for the Vice Presidency. The first of these distinguished citizens, himself an unwavering Democrat, had been elevated to the highest political distinctions, both State and National, by the Democratic party; while the second, though hitherto in party connection a Whig, was a Whig of the Revolutionary stamp—of the school of Franklin and Jefferson—not of that modern school, marked by devotion to the Interests of Property rather than to the rights of man.

It is enough to say of these nominations, and of the canvass which ensued, that by this action of the Independent Democracy, the prohibition of slavery in Oregon was secured, and the exclusion of slavery from the other territories was made the most prominent theme of political discussion, and both the other parties in the free States were compelled to declare themselves in favor of it; while the whole relations of the Federal Government to slavery were subjected to a thorough investigation, convincing multitudes that the best interests of the people, as well as the correct interpretation of the Constitution, demand the total divorce of the Federal Government from slavery. At the close of the canvass, it was found that three hundred thousand electors, nearly one-ninth of all the voters in the United States, had enrolled themselves on the side of freedom.

What, then, was to be done? No one seemed to think the contest over, and the time for disbanding arrived. On the contrary, the organization was everywhere maintained; and overtures for union and concert came from that division of the Democracy, which, during the recent canvass, had vainly expected success from concessions to slavery. In Wisconsin and Vermont, the two divisions of the Democracy united upon thoroughly Democratic platforms, unsullied by compromise with wrong. In Ohio and in Massachusetts, partial union and co-operation took place. In New York, the negotiations for a union were protracted. Conventions of both divisions met at Rome, in August,

1849, but separated without results. At length, however, a State ticket was arranged, each division nominating half the candidates, independently of the other, and both divisions agreeing to support the whole ticket. Many of the Free Soil Democrats manifested a strong repugnance to this arrangement. They earnestly desired to maintain their own distinct organization until the other division of the Democracy should be willing to accept their principles of freedom as the political faith of the united Democracy. They expressed strong apprehensions that a union upon any other basis would result in the compromise and final abandonment of their principles. To remove these apprehensions, and reconcile to the Union a body of earnest men, whose adhesion was indispensable to the success of the united ticket, strong resolutions, reiterating the principles of the Buffalo Platform, were adopted by the Free Soil division in convention at Utica, in September, and speeches were made by John Van Buren, Henry B. Stanton, and others, giving the strongest assurances that the proposed union would insure the recognition of these principles by the entire Democracy of New York.

An extract from a speech of Mr. Van Buren, upon the introduction of the resolutions, will show the character of these assurances:

"I will state," he remarked, "fairly, freely, and fully, what we expect. We expect to make the Democratic party of this State the great Anti-Slavery party of this State, and, through it to make the Democratic party of the United States the great Anti-Slavery party of the United States. Those who do not contemplate this result will do well to get out of the way; for there is no doubt that when our principles get fairly before the people, so that they can hear them, and know what they are—and we have made arrangements for that now—that the whole people will go with us. And our Southern friends, having had things all their own way for the last twenty-five or thirty years, must make up their minds to let us have our own way for a while, we being fair men, and reasonable in our demands."

These assurances prevailed, and the united ticket was agreed to.

Immediately after this, both divisions of the party met in Mass Convention, at Syracuse. At this Convention a resolution on slavery was adopted, affirming the constitutional power of Congress over slavery in the District of Columbia and the Territories, but not recommending the exercise of the power in respect to the District, and only recommending its exercise in regard to the Territories "on occasions of attempts" to introduce slavery into them. The resolution further declared, that simple agreement in support of the ticket, and not concurrence, even in these views, was to be made the basis of the union. This was certainly a serious retrogression from the position taken at Buffalo, and, only two days before, at Utica; and yet the leaders of the Radical Democracy still assured the friends of freedom that all was safe, and that the entire Democracy of New York would advance to the impartial application of Democratic principles to all questions, slavery included, and array its unbroken strength against the encroachments of slavery and the domination of the slave power. Many earnest opponents of slavery, relying on these assurances, gave to the united ticket, not a hes-

itating and reluctant, but a cordial and vigorous support.

What ground they had for such reliance will appear from declarations made at the Syracuse Mass Convention, and on other occasions, about the same time, by gentlemen who possessed their undivided confidence.

Among these gentlemen, **PRESTON KING** stood very prominent. His action in Congress, his course at Buffalo, his high repute for sincerity and integrity, had knit to him the affections of the Free Soil Democracy. He was formally called upon to address the Mass Convention, and among other things said:

"The great question before the American people now is, shall the interests of slavery, as a political power, predominate over the principles of freedom in this country? There is no doubt that this is the prominent question before the country. * * * There is no doubt that the reason for not expressing such sentiments on this subject as are entertained, is the apprehension that the slave States will be lost. There is no doubt that this mercenary consideration hinders many from speaking out what they think and feel. The object of this Convention is to unite the party, so that its action may be unanimous in Congress in favor of freedom. And that action must be unanimous. We must require that every member of Congress from the North shall stand firm upon this question. I believe that our Conventions at Rome and Utica were sincere and unanimous in the determination to sacrifice everything else except principle to procure a union, and equally unanimous in the determination not to sacrifice a particle of principle. I believe, and we believe, that nine-tenths of the Free Soil men agree with us on this question. If not, I should not desire this union; but, for certain reasons which are unknown to me, certain men who have had much influence with them are not here. Perhaps they do not agree with us, and do not desire this union. In the country in which I reside, there are many men belonging to a party which united their strength with ours last year, at Buffalo, in a way which excited my admiration. They wished to see the advancement of the principles of freedom, and showed no solicitude about the distribution of offices. Let us now be true to principle under this union, and they will go with us, and so will all honest and liberty-loving men; but the moment we abandon this principle they will quit, and I will quit with them."

JOHN VAN BUREN, who had been regarded as the *Cœur de Lion* of the Free Democracy, and whose bold voice for freedom had rung throughout the land like a trumpet call, everywhere arousing enthusiasm, and everywhere inspiring determination, also addressed this Mass Convention. After declaring, in strong terms, his unaltered convictions on the subject of slavery, and the existing necessity for speech and action, he said:

"I have had occasion to say, heretofore, that I would not support any man for the Presidency who does not believe slavery to be an unmitigated evil, and who will not use all the power which the Constitution and laws may place in his hands, for its overthrow. I would give notice now, that the general judgment of the people in this State is, that they cannot and will not swerve from this position; and as for me, I shall live and die by it. This committee have not reported that as a resolution, and have therefore fallen far short of what I want said; but, nevertheless, they do say something."

The speech to which Mr. Van Buren referred was delivered at Cleveland, on the anniversary of the Ordinance of 1787, just one month previous to the assembling of the Mass Convention at Syracuse. In that speech he had thus defined his position:

"When I have heard it said that no slaveholder shall be President of the United States, I have dissented. Washington was a slaveholder; so was Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe. When a slaveholder like them shall sustain our principles, he can bring to our aid a class of men no other man can reach; therefore, I do not think it proper to take such a position. I am, however, the unmitigated enemy of slavery, and would have it abolished without delay. I say, therefore, for myself—and I wish to be understood as speaking for myself alone—that, *but what will come*, I shall, under no necessity whatever, sup-

port any man for President who does not believe slavery to be an unmitigated curse, and who will not, by virtue of his office, use all constitutional power to abolish it. But I ask, by what mode are we to reach the object in view? The answer is plain. By going back to that adopted and pursued by the immortal founders of our Government. It is summarised briefly in this: No more slave States—no more slave Territories—the withdrawal of the support of the Federal Government from slavery, and the abolition of it wherever it can be reached by constitutional means. I know very well we have no power to touch it within the States where it now exists; but, even there, we can surround it by free States, whose action and example will wear it away."

Against Compromise, that insidious enemy of liberty, he thus emphatically warned his hearers:

"All our danger lies in Compromise. Then see to it, that those who represent you are faithful to the cause of Freedom; see to it, that they make no Compromise with slavery."

While these prominent Free Soil Democrats thus gave their sanction to the proposed union, it was understood also that the measure received the approbation of **MARTIN VAN BUREN**, who, in his letter accepting the Buffalo nomination, had not only declared himself as "approving of the platform which the Convention had adopted," but as "conscious, from my impressions of right and duty in regard to it, that I shall be among the last to abandon it;" and who, in a very recent letter to the Cleveland Convention, had declared his unchanged conviction that "the influence of the Government should be kept actively and perpetually on the side of freedom."

Quotations of this character might be extended indefinitely. They might be gathered from the speeches and letters of public men; from the resolutions and addresses of political assemblages and committees; and from the columns of the press; but it is not necessary. No one can doubt that the masses of the earnest Free Soil Democracy were induced to go into the union by the hope and expectation that the entire Democracy would unite in the great purpose to divorce the Federal Government from slavery, and resist all future compromises with wrong; and by their conviction that, in case this hope and expectation should be disappointed, that they who were now foremost in recommending the union would be foremost in repudiating it.

That there was ground for the opinion so confidently expressed in respect to the prevalence of Free Soil opinions among the Democratic masses, was made sufficiently apparent by the answer of the candidates to the interrogatories touching their positions on the slavery question: among which answers, that of Mr. Chatfield, nominated by the Hunkers for Attorney General, was as decisive and as explicit in its anti-slavery character, as that of either of the Radical Democrats. Not many months, however, elapsed, before an occasion presented itself for testing, in a more striking manner, the consequences of the union.

Congress assembled in December, 1849, and the whole question of slavery and slavery extension was brought into discussion. The result is now before us. Strengthened by the influence of several prominent Democrats, and aided by the whole power and influence of the

Whig administration, HENRY CLAY succeeded in carrying through both Houses that series of bills now known as the Compromise measures. It is due to the memory of that distinguished statesman to say, that those measures, as sketched in the resolutions submitted by him to the Senate, though they did not yield a single demand of the Free Soil Democrats, were yet much less obnoxious in their character than they finally became, through the alterations by which it was sought to recommend them to slave State Senators. But it is due to truth, further to say, that not a single amendment was made in any one of the Compromise bills, designed to make them more acceptable to the opponents of slavery. Every change was against liberty.

The admission of California into the Union secured indeed the territory within its limits against the introduction of slavery, except through the act of the State itself; and the prohibition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia relieved the city of Washington of the slave pens which had disgraced us: though it continued to slavery itself, and to the ordinary traffic in human beings within the District, the full protection of national legislation. The other acts, which converted a vast district of free territory into slave soil; assumed five millions of the Texan State debt; undertook, without any constitutional warrant, to bind future Congresses to admit slave States out of New Mexico and Utah, should the inhabitants allow slavery; and, in plain violation of the Constitution, in derogation of State rights, and in disregard of the common principles of justice and humanity, attempted to degrade the free-men of the North and West into the slave-catchers of the General Government, were all utterly repugnant to the principles of Radical Democracy. To approve of any of these acts, or to acquiesce in any of them—except the act providing for the settlement of the Texan boundary, and the payment of the Texan debt, which was in its nature irrevocable—seemed impossible for Democrats who had pledged their faith to freedom at Buffalo and Utica.

Under these circumstances, the Democracy of New York met in Convention at Syracuse, on the 10th of September, while the Compromise Congress was yet in session. A united ticket for State officers was again nominated: but the resolutions uttered no condemnation of obnoxious measures of the Compromise, which the Free Soil Democrats in Congress had perseveringly opposed: urged no action against nationalized slavery: failed even to recommend the repeal or modification of the Fugitive Slave Law—more odious and more irreconcilable with Democratic ideas than the Alien and Sedition laws; but “congratulated the country” upon the passage of the Compromise measures, styled by the Convention “the recent settlement, by Congress, of the questions which have unhappily divided the people of these States!” Concurrence in this action by the Radical De-

mocracy was a virtual abandonment of the positions maintained at Rome and Utica, and even of the lower ground taken by the Mass Convention at Syracuse.

Disregard of the claims of freedom, far less marked than this, had occasioned the Herkimer movement of 1847. Now, however, acquiescence was judged expedient by those distinguished citizens who possessed their confidence, and again the Free Soil Democrats, with visible reluctance on the part of many, sustained the nominations of the Convention.

The same conventional action, followed by the same acquiescence, was repeated in 1851.

Still the Free Soil Democracy of New York was uncommitted to the support of national candidates nominated upon any other than the national Democratic platform of 1840, 1844, and 1848, which platform referred to slavery only in a single resolution, which had generally been construed by the New York Free Soil Democrats, as discountenancing not constitutional opposition to nationalized slavery, but unconstitutional interference by Congress with slavery in the States.

Under these circumstances, the Baltimore Convention assembled in May last. As in 1848, so in 1852, slaveholding Conventions had declared in advance their determination to support no candidates, nominated or not nominated by the National Convention, entertaining those views of slavery which the Radical Democracy of New York had repeatedly avowed: which were cherished as sound and constitutional by a large proportion of the free State Democracy, and which had been solemnly proclaimed as the convictions of the whole Democracy of Ohio, by each successive Convention, from 1848 to 1852, inclusive. All Democratic statesmen who would not take the test oath of allegiance to slavery were proscribed as inadmissible candidates, even for nomination. As in 1848, so in 1852, many of the slave States were represented by numerous delegations, whose united clamors, upon all questions not taken by States, were able to drown the voices of the delegations of the free States, generally equal only in number to their electoral votes. These numerous delegations were appointed and attended in open disregard of the recommendation of the National Convention of 1848, that the Democracy of each State should send no more delegates than the State was entitled to have electors in the electoral college: and yet, when it was proposed, upon the first day of the Convention, to confine each State to the recommended number of delegates, and thus insure to each its proper weight in the Convention, it was opposed with such vehemence and pertinacity, that the proposition was finally abandoned, and the inequality again submitted to. The Convention thus constituted, under the operation of the two-thirds rule—which made a nomination impossible without the concurrence of the delegation from the slave States—nominated FRANKLIN

PIERCE, of New Hampshire, and WILLIAM R. KING, of Alabama, as candidates for President and Vice President of the United States. I have no word to utter in disparagement of the just claims of either of these distinguished citizens to respect and honor for their private virtues and public services. I shall speak only of their relations to the Free Soil Democracy of the country, and of their positions on the great question of slavery, which is NOT SETTLED, whatever politicians or political Conventions may affirm.

The record of General PIERCE, as a Representative and Senator in Congress, presents him as the denier of reference and consideration to the petitions of the people against nationalized slavery, and as the supporter of the extreme resolutions of Mr. Calhoun in favor of slavery. No public record, within my knowledge, indicates his position during those years following his return from Mexico, when the New Hampshire Democracy took ground against territorial slavery and nationalized slavery in this District. In his recent letter, accepting the nomination of the Compromise Democratic Convention, however, after declaring with what "pride and gratitude" he should cherish the recollection of the fact that "the voice which first pronounced" for him, "and pronounced alone," came from Virginia, he proceeds to say:

"I accept the nomination, upon the platform adopted by the Convention, not because it is expected of me as a candidate, but because the principles it enforces command the approbation of my judgment, and with them I believe I can safely say that there has been no word or act of my life in conflict."

The whole political life of WILLIAM R. KING, the nominee for Vice President, has been marked by hostility to the principles of the Free Soil Democracy.

With FRANKLIN PIERCE he opposed the reference or consideration of petitions against slavery, and sustained the Calhoun resolutions in 1837. At a later period, he united with the opponents of the right of petition in denying to petitions of this character the poor privilege of reception. In 1850 he even went so far as to move to lay upon the table the question of reception of a petition against the extension of slavery into New Mexico and California, and, of course, voted for the motion, the effect of which, had it prevailed, would have been to prevent the bare reception of the petition. In respect to territorial slavery, he has ever maintained the extreme doctrine that every slaveholder is warranted by the Constitution in taking his slaves into any national territory, and holding them there until prohibited by the State law, after the organization of a State Government: in other words, that all national territory is slave territory. In the course of the discussion which arose on the petition just referred to, he said:

"What do they ask? They ask that, by the action of Congress, slavery shall be prohibited from going into the Territories. Very well; does the Senator pretend that the prayer of the petition does not call for action on the part of Congress? Does he not know that, without some such action, every State has an equal right in this Territory, and that every citizen of the United

States can go to those Territories, and carry his property of every description with him."

On another occasion he said:

"I believe that whenever a Territorial Government is established, if persons holding slaves think proper to go there with them, this Government is bound to protect them till the period arrives when the population is sufficient for the formation of a State Constitution."

On another occasion he said:

"Are we not protected in our property if we choose to go there? I hold that we are, and that the Territorial Legislature has no power whatever to pass any law which destroys that description of property in that Territory. They are bound, on the other hand, to pass laws for the protection of property, of whatever description. * * * Sir, I have an apprehension of the force of Mexican law; and if I chose to remove with my property into that Territory, I would not be deterred one moment by the apprehension of any such law."

In his letter accepting the nomination of the Convention, he thus declares his present position:

"The platform, as laid down by the Convention, meets with my cordial approbation. It is national in all its parts; and I am content, not only to stand upon it, but, on all occasions, to defend it."

Now, what is the platform thus endorsed by these eminent citizens? There has been little or no controversy, of late, in the ranks of the Democracy, except on the subject of slavery. In regard to this subject, radical differences have existed.

The opponents of nationalized slavery and slavery extension were willing to unite with their brethren, who disagreed with them on these questions, upon a platform which should leave these matters of difference open to discussion, without prejudice to either side, and in support of a ticket so constituted as to afford a guarantee that the influence of the Administration, should the nominees be elected, would not be brought to bear against either side. Honorable men, having a common attachment to Democratic principles and policy, and sincere in the maintenance of Free Soil principles or of the Compromises, could not, it would seem, without a sacrifice of self-respect, act together upon any other ground. But the main-tainers of the Compromises and the supporters of slavery were not content to unite with their Democratic brethren upon these terms. They demanded an endorsement of the Compromises, and a distinct pledge against Free Soil speech and action. Hence all the interest felt in the platform converged upon the resolutions relating to slavery: and, in the present condition of the public mind, these resolutions may be said to constitute the platform. They are as follows:

"Resolved, That Congress has no power, under the Constitution, to interfere with or control the domestic institutions of the several States, and that such States are the sole and proper judges of everything appertaining to their own affairs, not prohibited by the Constitution; that all efforts of the abolitionists or others, made to induce Congress to interfere with questions of slavery, or to take ineffectual steps in relation thereto, are calculated to lead to the most alarming and dangerous consequences; and that all such efforts have an inevitable tendency to diminish the happiness of the people, and endanger the stability and permanency of the Union, and ought not to be countenanced by any friend of our political institutions."

"Resolved, That the foregoing resolution covers and was intended to embrace the whole subject of slavery agitation in Congress; and, therefore, the Democratic party of the Union, standing on this national platform, will abide by and adhere to a faithful execution of the acts known as the Compromise measures, settled by the last Congress, the act for reclaiming fugi-

tives from service or labor' included; which not being designed to carry out an express provision of the Constitution, cannot, with fidelity thereto, be repeated or so changed as to destroy or impair its efficiency.

Resolved, That the Democratic party will resist all attempts at a meeting, in Congress or out of it, the agitation of the slavery question, under whatever shape or color the attempt may be made."

These resolutions satisfy in full the demands of the Compromise Democrats. They repudiate the construction placed by the New York Democracy upon the slavery resolution of the original Baltimore platform, and pledge the entire Democracy to the support of the Compromises; to the perpetual maintenance and execution of the Fugitive Slave Law; and to resistance to all discussion of slavery, in Congress or out of Congress, under whatever shape or color.

No two persons, probably, contributed more than the nominees of the Convention, to place the Democratic party in its present attitude. Gen. PIERCE, in behalf of Northern Compromise Democrats, thus wrote to Major LALLY, at Baltimore, immediately before the sitting of the Convention:

"The sentiment of no one State is to be regarded on this subject; but having fought the battle in New Hampshire upon the Fugitive Slave Law, and upon what we believe to be the ground of constitutional right, we should, of course, desire the approval of the Democracy of the country. What I wish to say to you is this: if the Compromise measures are not to be substantially and firmly maintained, the plain rights secured by the Constitution will be trampled in the dust. * * If we of the North, who have stood by the constitutional rights of the South, are to be abandoned to any time-serving policy, the hopes of Democracy and of the Union must sink together."

Months before this, Mr. KING, in his letter to C. H. Donaldson—that noted man of straw—had thus strongly expressed his feelings in regard to Free Soil Democrats, and the necessity of repudiating all political connection with them:

"So long as a large portion of the Democracy of the North had their lives to the advocacy of Free Soil doctrines, and make common cause with the infamous agitators and Abolitionists, no portion of the Southern Democracy will ever be found acting in concert with them. All our troubles have arisen from the extraordinary conduct of those professing Democrats in whom the Democracy once reposed unbounded confidence, and felt delighted to honor. But for their base abandonment of principle, Abolitionism would have still been confined to a portion of the Whig party, and a small squad of ignorant fanatics."

This statement presents the question: Can those Democrats who united at Buffalo in a solemn declaration of their independence of the slave power, and of perpetual opposition to slavery extension and nationalized slavery, or those who, perceiving the entire harmony of this declaration with the great principles of Democracy, have since declared their concurrence in it, now support the nominees of the Baltimore Compromise Convention?

It cannot be denied that the slavery resolutions of the Convention's platform are utterly irreconcilable with this declaration. The candidates represent the platform, and especially the slavery resolutions. To their influence and action the course of the Convention, in the adoption of these resolutions, must, in no small degree, be ascribed. It is not easy to see how any man, whether Radical or Hunker, Free Soil or Pro-Slavery, in view of these facts,

can hesitate as to the proper answer to be given to the question just asked. To me it seems that consistency, honor, self-respect, fidelity to engagements—indeed, all obligations, moral and political—bind Free Soil Democrats to withhold their support from these nominations.

And yet I am aware that not a few prominent individuals, deeply engaged to the Free Soil Democracy, and among them the three distinguished New York Democrats, whose declarations I have quoted in a former part of this letter, have announced their purpose to support the Compromise candidates. I am aware, too, that with two or three unhappily distinguished exceptions, the Free Soil Democrats who take this course declare themselves as much as ever opposed to nationalized slavery and the Fugitive Slave Law, and as ready as ever, whether as private citizens or as Representatives, to speak and vote against both.

I entertain a very high personal respect for these gentlemen. I followed their lead, cheerfully and zealously, until, in 1850, they acquiesced in the Syracuse resolution congratulating the country upon the passage of the Compromise measures. Notwithstanding this, I still hoped and believed that, upon the occurrence of a crisis like the present, the Democrats of New York would *again* "feel it their duty to intervene"—that "the voices of her freemen" would be *again* "lifted up to warn, to encourage, and to rally the friends of freedom, the lovers of justice, and the supporters of the Constitution;" that it would *again* "peal, in trumpet-tones, at Herkimer and Utica," and be re-echoed from "every hill-top in the State."

Thousands share with me the keen regrets occasioned by the disappointment of this hope. Thousands—and among them not a few New York Democrats—while they will not question the motives or the fidelity to their own convictions of those who take a different view, fail to see either the propriety or prudence of supporting the Compromise Ticket, and thus giving the highest possible sanction, even while in words rejecting it, to the Compromise Platform.

If it be not yet too late, I would respectfully ask these gentlemen themselves, what they expect to gain for Freedom or Free Soil Democracy by supporting the Compromise Ticket?

Is it that Free Soil Democrats will share in the patronage or influence the action of the Administration, in the event of success? This expectation must rest upon one of two suppositions: either that Free Soil Democrats will forego the assertion of their principles, in which case Freedom would gain nothing, but lose much; or that General PIERCE, notwithstanding the platform and his present position, will give prominent stations to men whose actions will endanger that very slave interest which he is expected specially to guard, in which case the supporters of that interest will have just cause to complain. Is either of these suppositions likely to be realized?

Is it that the extension of slavery will be checked, or the removal of nationalized slavery secured? Every one knows that the leading idea of the platform, fully endorsed by the candidates, is the indefinite perpetuation of slavery at the national capital, with all the reproach it brings upon our institutions and Government, and the permanent maintenance, as irrevocable, of the Fugitive Slave Act, marked as it is by the most unwarrantable invasion of the rights of the States and the liberties of individuals. It is well known, also, that persistent efforts are now being made to introduce slavery into California, either by an alteration of the Constitution, or by a division of the State and the establishment of a Territorial Government in the southern part; to convert Utah and New Mexico into slaveholding Territories, with a view to the creation of slave States; and to extend slavery by insular or continental acquisitions, in which the system now exists or may be established. To none of these projects can any effectual opposition be expected from the Administration of the Compromise Nominees, if elected.

Is it that the other great interests of Freedom and Progress will be promoted? What word does the platform contain in favor of constitutional improvement of Rivers and Harbors, so important to the progress of the West, and to which the Free Democracy pledged its support at Buffalo? What word in favor of Land Reform, so important to the settlement of the public domain, and so beneficent to the struggling masses of our native population, and to the emigration which presses upon us from the Old World? What word in favor of any action or declaration by our Government, in favor of the nations of Europe contending for freedom against despots? No State has more uniformly and steadily opposed all these measures of Progress and Reform and Freedom, than that which "pronounced first and pronounced alone" for General PIERCE at Baltimore. Nor is there any vote or act of his, so far as I am aware, which does not justify its preference.

Is it that Free Soil Democrats expect that, whatever may be the result of the pending election, the cause of Freedom will still survive; that the principles of living Democracy will still inspire determination to maintain right and resist wrong? that, at length, the slave power, with all the oppression and injustice it upholds, and with all its ostracism, social and political, of earnest friends to liberty, will be overthrown? and that our National Government will become what our fathers designed it to be, a free Government in fact as well as in name, with all its influence actively and perpetually on the side of freedom at home and

throughout the world? This expectation will not, I hope, be disappointed; but, if fulfilled, it will not be through but in spite of such action as that of the Baltimore Compromise Convention. The support of its nominees, I am firmly convinced, will not hasten but retard its fulfilment.

I have thus stated frankly, but with entire respect for those who differ from me, the reasons which convince me that Free Soil Democrats cannot, without marked inconsistency, support the nominees of the Compromise Democracy. I address them to you because it so happened that we were co-laborers in the preparation of the platform promulgated by the Buffalo Convention, and afterwards closely connected in our relations to the Convention and its nominees; because, also, we both profess the same Democratic faith, and desire the success of the same Democratic measures. I know not what your judgment will be after the perusal of this letter. For myself, I confess that it is with the deepest regret that I find myself compelled to separate in action, at this or any time, from any portion of the Democratic party of the country, and especially from those New York Democrats with whom it has been my pride and pleasure, hitherto, to act. Had a liberal and tolerant spirit prevailed in the Baltimore Convention; had no new tests, incompatible with Democratic principles, been imposed; had the nominees represented that spirit, and the ideas of reform, progress, liberty, and economy, embodied in the original platform, no division need have occurred. The Convention is responsible for the division.

The Convention, which organized a Compromise Democracy upon new tests, created the necessity for a Radical and Independent Democracy. I am ready to submit to the judgment of candid Compromise Democrats themselves, whether any honorable course remains for those who think as I do, and mean to act as they think, other than independent action? Let even those Free Soil Democrats, who propose to vote the Compromise Ticket, say whether we, who refuse so to vote, do anything more than carry out their own declarations and adhere to their own principles?

May it not be hoped that there yet remain many thousands of Democrats in New York who will prefer to act with the INDEPENDENT DEMOCRACY, openly and avowedly on the side of liberty and progress, rather than with a COMPROMISE DEMOCRACY, intolerant alike of the claims and the friends of freedom?

I remain, with the highest respect and regard,
yours, truly,

S. F. CHASE.

Hon. B. F. Butler.